34. John Hinderaker, Scott Johnson, and Paul MirengoffAuthors, PowerLine

Political candidates can no longer afford to ignore political blogs, and PowerLine is among the most influential political blogs out there. This neoconservative triumvirate--three lawyers who met while attending Dartmouth College--gained their street cred during "RatherGate," when they assembled compelling arguments that the Killian documents, which Dan Rather used in a *60 Minutes* newscast on George W. Bush's National Guard service, were fake. Initially, Rather and CBS News poo-pooed the PowerLine bloggers; but in the end, CBS admitted the forgery and Rather resigned.

35. Vinton G. CerfChairman, ICANN   Board of Directors, and vice president and chief Internet evangelist, Google

Owing to his role in developing the TCP/IP protocols on which the Net depends, Vinton G. Cerf is one of the founding fathers of the Internet. Much of his work on the protocols occurred during the 1970s and early 1980s while he was employed by DARPA, the **Department of Defense**   's Advanced Research Projects Agency. (In honor of their work, Cerf and partner Robert Kahn received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2005.) Currently, Cerf chairs ICANN (the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), and in 2005 he became Google's vice president and chief Internet evangelist. He has been a strong advocate of Net neutrality, notably in an appearance before the Senate Judiciary Committee. He is also working with **NASA**   's Jet Propulsion Laboratory on an Interplanetary Internet for more-robust space communication systems.

IMPORTANT PEOPLE #36 THROUGH #40

36. Tim O'ReillyFounder and CEO, O'Reilly Media

O'Reilly coined the phrase "Web 2.0," and he continues to cohost (with John Battelle--see #26) the industry's must-attend Web 2.0 Summit conference. The Harvard-educated publisher laid his foundation in computer manuals. (Many a computer enthusiast would immediately recognize the intricate black-and-white line drawings of animals that grace the covers of O'Reilly books.) But his company has grown to incorporate the new media--blogs, podcasts, and online news--he espouses.

37. Drew CurtisFounder, Fark.com

Lewd, crude, and traffic-generating, Fark.com invites its community of ad hoc commentators to participate in an ongoing brutal but frequently witty dissection of current news stories that sometimes turns into news itself. When the site recently greenlighted a news item under the descriptive headline " **Anna Nicole Smith**   's condition downgraded to dead," Reuters and other international news outlets reported the crack. The enterprise is still primarily run by one guy: founder and smart-ass Drew Curtis. In January 2007, he launched FarkTV on the SuperDeluxe comedy video site. He is also scheduled to release a book titled *It's Not News, It's Fark: How Mass Media Tries to Pass Off Crap as News* in May 2007. (Yeah, but your media watchdog wants crap!)

38. Gabe RiveraCreator, Techmeme

Gabe Rivera has created a powerful content-analysis algorithm that scans traditional news media and blogs, identifies the important stories, and organizes them into easy-to-read clusters. His goal: to find the next big news story so that you don't have to. That's why influential bloggers, decision makers, and news junkies find his site Techmeme a must-read. Whereas Digg (see #32) ranks stories by vote, and Slashdot (see #44) does so by editorial opinion, the technology underlying Techmeme--and sister sites WeSmirch, Memeorandum, and Ballbug--may prove to be the most powerful way to harness the blogosphere's investigative power.

39. Dave WinerBlogger and author of RSS 2.0

If you are wasting hours a day perusing podcasts, then you have Dave Winer to thank or blame (depending on your point of view). He was one of the inventors of podcasting--and one of the first bloggers. Winer started his Scripting News blog, which is still well read, back in 1997. He also co-authored the SOAP protocol, an instrumental element in operating-system-independent Web services. Nevertheless, his work on RSS--the

technology behind Web content feeds--is what really earned him his fame. That, plus his ability to persuade the *New York Times* to use RSS and his work in amending it to support media files (giving birth to the podcast), makes him the father of modern-day content distribution.

40. Mike SchroepferVice president of engineering, Mozilla

In the ongoing browser war, Mike Schroepfer is a five-star general who leads a massive but decentralized open-source army of staff and volunteer engineers. Its mission: to improve what is right now the best Web browser on the planet, Firefox. The open-source nature of Firefox permits a faster development cycle for incorporating new features and security fixes. The proof of its success is Internet Explorer 7's adoption of FireFox features such as tabbed browsing. See our recent comparative review, "Radically New IE 7 or Updated Mozilla Firefox 2--Which Browser Is Better?"

IMPORTANT PEOPLE #41 THROUGH #45

41. Perez HiltonHollywood blogger

Love him or hate him, this controversial blogger (real name: Mario Lavandeira) has changed the face of celebrity journalism. Hilton's hugely popular Web site offers around-the-clock access to celebrity gossip and photos, but that's not the only reason that he's on our list. Hilton is involved in a legal battle with photo agency X17, which has accused him of using its copyrighted photos without permission. Hilton claims that posting the photos on his site is legal, amounting simply to fair use of newsworthy images. The $7.6 million federal lawsuit could have lasting effects on how bloggers everywhere use digital photos online.

42. Paul Graham, Trevor Blackwell, Robert Morris, and Jessica LivingstonFounders, Y Combinator

Rather than sinking a whole lot of money into a handful of companies that may (or may not) turn into the next big Google, venture capital firms like Y Combinator dole out smaller sums to potential mini-Googles. Y Combinator commits to two rounds of funding and dispenses less than $20,000 (expense money, really) to coders so they can work, work, work on a prototype to parlay into more funding. In exchange, Y Combinator asks for 2 to 10 percent of the company's stock. Startups that these guys have funded include Reddit (acquired by CondeNast), Kiko, and Weebly. The names sound funny, sure, but do you remember the first time you heard the name YouTube?

43. Mikko H. HypponenDirector of antivirus research, F-Secure

F-Secure's security news blog, written by director of antivirus research Mikko H. Hypponen, is one of the Internet's go-to places for learning about the latest security threats. Too bad Sony BMG didn't think so. When directly approached by F-Secure, Sony BMG ignored Hypponen's warnings about a rootkit hidden within the antipiracy software used in certain SonyBMG audio CDs. Though F-Secure didn't initially go public with the news, Windows expert Mark Russinovich detailed the rootkit discovery process on his blog. The resulting embarrassment (and a third-party lawsuit over the rootkit) might encourage Sony to take Hypponen more seriously next time.

44. Rob MaldaFounder, Slashdot.org

In 1997, Rob Malda (aka CmdrTaco) created Slashdot, the original blog with prioritized news content discussed in posts by snarky (and often highly technical) readers. In fact, the original news story often serves as a mere jumping off point for the site's meaty comments and discussions (fodder for links to more news stories). Even if you prefer Digg (see #32), Techmeme (see #38), Technorati, or some other news aggregation blog, don't forget that it all started with Slashdot. Authors and editors still consider it a badge of honor when their news story is "slashdotted," though increased competition from other sites has stolen a bit of Slashdot's thunder.

45. Nick DentonFounder, Gawker Media

Nick Denton's blog empire is so influential and so blogged about that you probably visit at least one of his 15 properties every day through one route or another. With titles that

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include New York City page six alternative Gawker, Washington, D.C., gossip rag Wonkette, L.A. equivalent Defamer, and tech news site Gizmodo, Denton's empire is unquestionably the most successful independent blogging venture on the Web right now, holding considerable sway over industries from automobiles to Hollywood to high tech.

IMPORTANT PEOPLE #46 THROUGH #50

46. Sir Tim Berners-LeeDirector, World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)

What do you do after you invent the World Wide Web and give it away for free? Start a consortium that works on making it better This British scientist designed the first Web browser, editor, and language protocol (HTTP) while employed as a scientist at **CERN** (the European Organization for Nuclear Research), and he founded the W3C in 1994. He has recently spoken in favor of Net neutrality. And like the old financial firm E.F. Hutton, when Berners-Lee talks, people listen.

47. Leo LaporteCreator, This Week in Tech (TWiT) podcast

For at least the past 15 years, the man behind Leoville has created, hosted, and written radio and television shows, most notably the former TechTV show *Screen Savers*. His personality-driven style demonstrated to the world that tech media could be fun. His most recent venture is the TWiT.tv podcast network, a listener-funded enterprise that has gathered some of the old TechTV crew and put them to work creating more than a dozen podcasts, including the eponymous "This Week in Tech."

48. Mohammed and Omar FadhilBlogging voice of Iraq

Countless bloggers are filled to the bloviating point with opinions about the Iraq War. But the brothers Fadhil, who blog at Iraq the Model bring a perspective that few others can match--because they're Iraqis, based in Baghdad. Whatever your political leanings, you'll find it impossible to read the Fadhil's posts without acquiring a deeper understanding of the war, its implications, and its after-effects. There's no better example anywhere of how citizen journalism is changing the world.

49. Jesse James GarrettPresident, Adaptive Path

Garrett, the president of San Francisco Web design boutique Adaptive Path, didn't invent Ajax, the assemblage of technologies and programming techniques that gives Web-based applications such as Zoho's productivity apps and Google Maps desktop software-like interactivity and speed. But Ajax didn't really take off until Garrett identified and named it in an influential essay--and he remains one the most eloquent advocates for the innovative, effective techniques used in many of the best Web 2.0 sites and services.

50. Tila TequilaMySpace Personality

If you're friends with singer/model/actress Tila Tequila (nee Nguyen), you're hardly alone. Some 1.6 million MySpace users identify themselves similarly. Tequila proved that these MySpace friendships can generate power, fame, and wealth. In fact, she redefined the word "friend" to encompass an individual you've never met. Despite what you may think of Ms. Tequila's talents, she could certainly teach a course in the new Web economy, having channeled her online popularity into A-list (well, C-list) fame. She has posed for Stuff magazine, she has a part in an Adam Sandler film currently in production, and her MySpace page currently boasts more than 56 million page views and 1,734,374 comments.

PC World's Danny Allen, Liane Cassavoy, Stephen Compton, Harry McCracken, and Narasu Rebbapragada contributed to this story.

Christopher Null is the self-proclaimed 349th most powerful person on the Web. He blogs about technology daily at tech.yahoo.com.

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